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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet was prepared for young people as a basis for discussion of attitudes about drinking. It reflects the latest findings in alcohol research and has been reviewed by many professionals and students. It examines basic statistics, sizes up individual attitudes about drinking, reviews experts' opinions on teenage drinking habits. The pamphlet offers a "Quiz Yourself" chapter in an attempt to help young people separate fact from myth and half-truths on the subject of alcohol. The section on "Handling Your Own Drinking or Nondrinking" deals with how to feel comfortable with a choice not to drink, or, if an adolescent chooses to drink, when, how, and how much. Answers to the quiz and additional facts about alcohol, including why people react differently when they drink, complete the discussion. (Author/PC)

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Thinking about Drinking

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This pamphlet was prepared for young people as a basis for discussion of attitudes about drinking. It reflects the latest findings in alcohol research.

The pamphlet has been reviewed by many young people, physicians, psychologists, teachers, and experts in alcohol education, whose interest and comment have made its publication possible.

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A Look at Teenage Drinking

If you're a young man or woman in your teens, you know that teenagers do drink. No matter how you yourself feel about drinking, you're aware that some young people use alcoholic beverages.

This fact often surprises, even frightens, many adults who point out that the legal drinking age in most States is 21.

Others accept the fact of teenage drinking. They note that young people are, after all, growing up around adults who drink; two out of three Americans over 21 do use alcohol.

Your own picture of teenagers using—or not using—alcohol is confined to your crowd, school, community. For a broader overall view, you can look at surveys made by researchers who

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questioned young men and women in many different places in the United States. Questionnaires showed that:

- A majority of teenagers (averaging roughly 60 percent) say that before leaving high school they have "used" alcoholic beverages.
- "Use" may mean anything from a single drink—or even a taste of someone else's drink—to fairly regular weekend beer parties with friends.
- In some communities, as few as 20 percent may have used alcohol; as many as 80 percent in others. The figure varies tremendously throughout the country, depending on age, sex, family habits, religion, friends' attitudes, community customs.
- A first "tasting" experience with alcohol usually occurs before a boy or girl reaches the age of 13. If parents drink, this first taste most often means having a few sips of a parent's beer or wine or mixed drink—in a very diluted form—at home.
- Curiosity and the urge to experiment ordinarily prompt the "tasting" experience.
- After this, some teenagers choose not to use alcohol. They may not like the flavor, or the effect, or the custom of using alcoholic beverages. They may be going along with parents' wishes, girl friend's or boy friend's preferences, athletic training rules, or their crowd's habits.
- Other teenagers do choose to use alcohol; beer is their most popular choice. They may enjoy the beverage, or the effect, or being accepted in a certain group, or making this choice on their own. Some may be rebelling against parents' restrictions, others may be following families' customs.

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How do you feel about these?

Teenagers report using alcohol in many different kinds of situations:

- drinking an occasional beer or glass of wine at the family supper table
- experimenting by getting high at a teenage party
- drinking at a bar or tavern
- drinking at a beer party where there are only boys (or only girls)
- sipping wine or punch at a family celebration
- having a mixed drink at a family gathering

How you size up each situation will depend on your own attitudes toward alcohol—attitudes that you have picked up over the years from family, friends, local customs, advertisements,

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laws, religious teaching. Most important are your family's attitudes. You may not necessarily follow your parents' pattern of drinking or not drinking, but what they say and do about alcohol will strongly affect your feelings about using it.

Take a young woman who has grown up in a family that enjoys drinking wine with every evening meal. She will surely have feelings toward alcohol that are quite different from those of a young man whose parents never use wine, beer, or liquor because they don't like or don't approve of alcohol.

Try showing this list to a dozen people, adults and teenagers. You may see as many as a dozen different reactions—and you may agree with none of them.

EXPERTS DISAGREE TOO...

When it comes to discussing young people and alcohol, even the researchers, health educators, physicians, and psychologists offer a confusing variety of suggestions.

There is probably only one point that all agree on: Uncontrolled drinking is dangerous. It may lead to drunkenness; it may lead to alcoholism. How to avoid these dangers is the question that stirs up so many different answers from the experts. For example:

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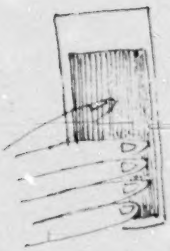
"No drinking should be the rule for everyone, teenagers and adults alike." (Abstainers believe that using alcohol is always wrong, can only create problems and lead to unhappiness. The only way to avoid drunkenness, they say, is never to drink.)



"Teenagers can't handle alcohol; they should wait until they're 21 to drink." (These people believe that adolescents are most likely to use alcohol unwisely, irresponsibly; therefore, they should be protected from using it at all. By 21, they feel, a person is legally of age to make his own choice.)

"Teenagers should learn to handle alcohol; the best place for this is in the home." (Some authorities argue that it is the parents' responsibility to teach teenagers how to drink safely, to let them experiment at home with wise ways of using alcohol.)

"Teenagers should learn, on their own, to drink moderately; any young person can handle one drink." (These experts insist that since many parents cannot face permitting their teenagers to drink, some boys and girls are bound to drink away from home. With a one-drink limit, these experts believe, young peo-

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ple can be comfortable in social situations with no concern about becoming drunk.)

"Adolescence is too late to start; young children should be allowed sips of wine or beer with their parents." (Some specialists say that when children learn what alcoholic beverages taste like, drinking is not mysterious or glamorous to them. They reason that since such children will grow up knowing how to drink appropriately for their age and the occasion—they are likely to continue to drink responsibly, to avoid drunkenness.)

Some of these suggestions may amuse or puzzle or shock you. Perhaps none of them rings a bell with you; you may not yet be interested in making a choice about drinking or not drinking. Perhaps one does seem just right for you; but the choice that's right for one young person, for one family, is not necessarily right for another.

That is why this pamphlet does not say "Don't drink" or "Drink." Instead, it presents facts about alcohol and practical suggestions for handling your own nondrinking or responsible drinking, whichever is your choice when the time comes to decide.

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Quiz Yourself

We all like to feel that we're guided by facts when we make important choices; but in the case of alcohol, many of us have more feelings than facts. How well can you separate the facts from the myths and half-truths?

Circle **TRUE** or **FALSE** beside each statement. The answers, with detailed explanations of how alcohol affects the body, begin on page **22.**

1. **True or False:** Alcohol is a drug.
2. **True or False:** Alcohol is a food.
3. **True or False:** In the body, alcohol is digested just as food is.
4. **True or False:** In the body, alcohol is burned up just as food is.
5. **True or False:** Because it is a stimulant, alcohol tends to pep a person up.
6. **True or False:** Everyone's body reacts the same way to the same amount of alcohol.
7. **True or False:** Alcoholic beverages can be fattening.

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8. **True or False:** Alcohol in any quantity will damage organs in the human body.

9. **True or False:** A person can die of alcohol poisoning.

10. **True or False:** All alcoholic beverages are equally strong.

11. **True or False:** Liquor taken straight will affect you faster than liquor mixed with water or soda in a highball.

12. **True or False:** You'll get drunker on vodka or gin or rum than on the same amount of whiskey.

13. **True or False:** Switching drinks will make you drunker than staying with one kind of alcoholic beverage.

14. **True or False:** You can sober up quickly by drinking black coffee and dousing your head with cold water.

15. **True or False:** It's risky to drive a car right after having a drink.

16. **True or False:** Drunkenness and alcoholism are the same thing.

17. **True or False:** Anyone who drinks at all is likely to become an alcoholic person.

18. **True or False:** Alcoholic individuals can be helped.

19. **True or False:** There are certain symptoms to warn people that their drinking may be leading to alcoholism.

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HANDLING YOUR OWN DRINKING or NONDRINKING

Making a choice about whether or not to drink is not the toughest problem connected with alcohol.

For some young people, this choice may even be quite simple and clear-cut. Drinking may be very much against the customs of your family, religion, school, or community. Then, there may be no question in your mind; you have no intention of drinking. On the other hand, drinking may be an acceptable activity within your home. Thus, the choice to drink may seem to present no conflict, even when you are in your teens.

But for everyone, by far the toughest problem is learning to live with your choice. Knowing how to handle your nondrinking or drinking. How to feel comfortable sticking by your choice not to drink? Or, if you choose to drink, how much to drink, and when, and how?

These questions need clear thinking. Some suggestions appear here; others may come from your family.

When young people commented on early drafts of this pamphlet, many said they didn't feel free to discuss drinking with their parents—but they definitely wished they could. One way to make it easier is for teenagers in the same crowd to sit down with all their parents to work out specific guidelines that all will follow.

No matter what help and suggestions you receive from others, the actual doing is up to you and your own good sense.

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IF You Choose NOT to Drink

Know your own positive reason

Take time to look honestly at your own attitudes. There's no need to hide from the fact that you're abstaining because your parents prefer it, because you're not confident of how you might behave when drinking, or simply because you don't like the taste or effect. These are strong, sensible reasons for not drinking. Any reason for abstaining is a sensible reason *for you*, provided you see it clearly and honestly.

Don't apologize for abstaining

In many situations, it does take guts to say "No, thanks" to a drink. Say it calmly, casually, firmly. Keep it brief, too; don't give excuses or explanations or arguments. A discussion period is a good time for explanations; a party isn't.

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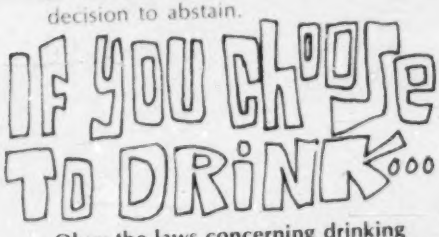
Expect others to respect your choice

When you're confident of your own choice, you will take it for granted that your "No, thanks" will receive respect from others. Your firm manner will make this clear to them, and respect is what you'll get. But if you're hesitant, you pave the way for others to tease or argue; that creates difficulties.

Respect the drinker's choice to drink

Try sincerely to give the person who drinks the same acceptance you want from him. If you can't—if you sneer or argue or shake your head sadly—you're backing him into a corner. His next move may be to fight his way out, probably by embarrassing you for your decision to abstain.



Obey the laws concerning drinking

In most States, the "legal drinking age" refers to the sale or serving of alcohol in a public place. Usually this does not apply to drinking in a private home or other nonpublic place. This is not true everywhere; the laws vary. Some States do prohibit serving alcohol in homes to people under 21. A few States do permit the sales of alcoholic beverages to anyone over 18.

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Find out about the laws in your State, your county, and your community.

Don't abuse yourself when you drink

Drunkenness is abusing yourself. Drinking to show off, or to take a dare, is abusing yourself. Driving immediately after drinking any alcoholic beverage is abusing yourself. So is drinking if you feel you "need a drink"; this may lead to life-long dependence on alcohol or even, for some people, to alcoholism.

Understand how to use alcohol wisely

Watch people who use alcohol moderately, successfully. They may have a drink or two to slow down and relax, to increase their pleasure in socializing with others, to enjoy the flavor of the beverage and of good food. They drink slowly, sipping the beverage, never gulping it. They space out their drinks and limit themselves to the few drinks they know they can handle without losing control of their behavior. They try to make it a habit to eat while drinking. They don't drink when they "need" one, saying "No, thanks" if they're overtired, anxious, depressed. They can enjoy themselves without an alcoholic beverage, too.

Face the risks of drinking too much

Look clearly at the possibilities. At the least, drunkenness may cause embarrassment and a hangover. At the most, drunkenness may create tragic situations: a driver smashes up a car and is crippled . . . a group of young people destroy property and are arrested as delinquents . . . a young man and young

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woman go beyond petting and must face the consequences of an unwanted pregnancy. True, these tragedies also occur when people are sober, but the risks are higher when people drink too much.

Respect the attitudes of nondrinkers

Do you only talk about this, or have you worked out practical ways to show your respect? If your date is a nondrinker, could you make him or her feel more comfortable by drinking only ginger ale or cola that evening? If your family is planning a holiday party, could you add a nonalcoholic punch to the menu for the nondrinkers?

HOW WOULD YOU HANDLE THIS?

Each question on the next few pages presents a situation that might face almost any young woman or young man. Each suggested answer gives a possible way to react.

Some of the possibilities may be right—or wrong—for everyone; others may be right for one person and wrong for another. Don't look only for a "correct answer." Instead, think and talk about these situations; consider what each suggestion might lead to. How might it help or harm people?

For you, none of the suggestions may be right; often you may find your own better solution.

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What Does a Family Do If....

a teenager who is allowed to drink at home assumes that he or she can drink anywhere?
(Does the teenager have the right to assume this? Should the parents move first in setting up ground rules? Should the teenager ask them for rules?)

the parents are nondrinkers and their teenagers are wondering whether to drink?
(Do the parents decide their teenagers will not drink? Do the teenagers make a decision on their own? Do parents and teenagers discuss the question together before any decision is made?)

the teenager planning a party wants to serve beer?
(Does the teenager make this decision? Do the parents? Does the family consider the attitudes of the guests' parents? Does the family have a responsibility for getting the guests home if drinks are served?)

one of the parents drinks so much that alcohol interferes with his or her daily living?
(Does the family try to carry on as if there were no problem? Does the family consult the family doctor? Does the family try to persuade the drinker to call the local Alcoholics Anonymous group, or the community's mental health or alcoholism clinic?)

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WHAT DOES A GIRL DO-

she sees that her date is getting high at a party?
(Does she ignore it? Does she ask him to stop drinking? Does she ask one of the other boys to talk to him?)

she doesn't like drinking, but does like her date who wants her to accept a drink?
(Does she accept the drink? Does she argue with him? Does she laugh off his remark and refuse the drink?)

she doesn't like drinking, and her date smells of whiskey when he calls for her?
(Does she pretend not to notice? Does she ask if he has been drinking? Does she explain how she feels about drinking? Does she say she'd rather not go out with him because he has been drinking?)

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WHAT DOES A BOY DO—

he feels high when it's time to leave a party and drive his date home?
(Does he call for a cab? Try to act as if he isn't high? Ask his date to drive, if she is a nondrinker? Leave his car and take a lift with a sober friend?)

his parents ask where he's going when he's headed for a beer party?
(Does he tell them about the beer party? Tell them where he'll be, but not mention the beer? Make up a story about where he's going?)

his date is drinking more at a party than she can handle?
(Does he hope she'll sober up before the party ends? Does he tell her she must stop drinking? Does he suggest leaving the party and taking her home immediately?)

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What Does any young PERSON Do IF

he or she is the only nondrinker at a party where everyone urges him to have a drink?
(Does he take one drink, sip it slowly, and eat a lot? Refuse the drink, saying that he's in training for football, even if he isn't? Taste a drink and later pour the rest of it down the drain?)

he or she has never had a drink and wants to see what drinking is like?
(Does he ask his parents to let him drink with the family? Experiment at home when his parents are away? Experiment at a friend's home?)

he or she drinks occasionally and finds beer being served at a party?
(Does he accept the beer, anytime, anywhere? Ask himself whether he really wants the drink, and why? Consider the particular circumstances of this party?)

he or she is halfway through a second drink and suddenly feels the room spinning?
(Does he put down the drink and accept no more drinks? Finish the drink? Finish the drink and take another?)

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Managing Your Choices

We will always be surrounded by conflicting messages about drinking. For some of us, all drinking is always wrong. For others, drinking is a pleasurable part of sociability. Each of us chooses the message that is right for him; but most of us can probably agree with this statement:

Each person—

- should feel free not to drink at all

  or . . .

- should learn to handle alcohol responsibly, to drink without drunkenness.

Sooner or later you will be making your own choices about drinking; everybody does. You can look more clearly at drinking in the world around you if you understand how alcohol works in the human body, how drinking affects behavior, why young people face special questions about drinking.

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ANSWERS

Alcohol is a special type of drug; it affects the nervous system after it reaches the brain.

Alcohol is called a food because it contains calories. But it is not a proper substitute for the usual foods in a balanced diet since it is almost completely lacking in the many other nutrients needed for growth and maintenance of good health.

Alcohol does not have to be digested slowly, as most other foods must be, before reaching the blood stream. Alcohol is immediately absorbed into the blood, passing directly through the walls of the stomach and the small intestine. The blood rapidly carries it to the brain. This is why alcohol may affect a drinker so quickly.

The body burns up alcohol through the process of oxidation—a series of chemical changes that enables food to release energy. Oxidation takes place mostly in the liver, which needs about 1 hour to burn up 1/2 ounce of alcohol; this is the amount contained in one average highball, one glass of wine, or one can of beer. Mean

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while, the unoxidized alcohol remains in the blood stream and continues to have an effect on the brain.

Alcohol is generally a depressant, not a stimulant, but sometimes a drinker imagines that he is being pepped up. This is why:

Alcohol's first effect on the brain is to slow down the brain area that controls judgment and thought. Thus, alcohol may interfere with a person's normal ability to do certain mental tasks: to remember, to understand, to reason, to make decisions.

In slowing down this area, alcohol releases the drinker's inhibitions which usually guard his behavior. Since he is less inhibited, more relaxed, he may at first feel unusually free-and-easy and gay. But his nervous system is being depressed, not stimulated; and this depressant action increases if the person continues to drink.

Alcohol also tends to slow down the brain area that controls muscular coordination. Thus, alcohol may also interfere with a person's normal ability to do certain physical tasks: to coordinate movement of his arms and legs, to speak clearly, to balance himself.

If a person takes in alcohol faster than his body can oxidize it, the alcohol concentration in his blood will increase. As the alcohol concentration builds up, his reactions become less and less dependable when he tries to reason, to remember, to coordinate the muscles that help him to stand, move, drive. With the depressant action increasing, relaxation may give way to feeling high, then drunk, and finally—if he continues to drink—to passing out.

Reactions to alcohol vary tremendously. Different people react differently to the same amount of

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alcohol. Even the same person may react differently to the same amount of alcohol under different circumstances.

Reactions depend on many complex factors. A person may be influenced by physical factors: how fast he drinks; whether he has eaten; the type of beverage; his body weight; his body chemistry. He may also be influenced by psychological factors: the situation he's in; his mood; his attitude toward drinking; his drinking experience.

For examples of how and why these factors may influence a drinker, see "Why People React Differently to Alcohol" on page 29.

Alcohol is higher in calories than sugars and starches, although lower than fats. An ounce of liquor contains about 70 calories, the equal of a fried chicken drumstick. A 12-ounce can of beer contains about 150 calories, the equal of one frankfurter. The calories in alcohol can contribute to overweight. However, if alcohol is substituted for a balanced diet, the person may suffer from malnutrition.

Moderate amounts of alcohol usually do not harm body organs in the well-nourished person. But large amounts and high concentrations of alcohol may lead to irritation or inflammation of parts of the digestive system; prolonged and heavy drinking may seriously affect the heart, liver, stomach, and other organs.

If a person rapidly gulps down an unusually large amount of alcohol (more than a pint), it may kill him.

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Alcoholic beverages are made from two different processes — fermentation and distillation. Distillation creates beverages containing higher concentrations of alcohol.

Wines and beers are fermented beverages. Most beer made in the United States contains about 4 percent pure alcohol. Ordinary table wines (such as burgundies, sauternes) contain up to 14 percent pure alcohol. Dessert or cocktail wines (ports and sherries, for instance) are fortified with extra alcohol, increasing the alcohol content to 16 or 21 percent.

Liquors are distilled beverages: rum, gin, vodka, brandy, and whiskey (rye, bourbon, Scotch). Liquors usually contain between 40 and 50 percent pure alcohol. In this country, a liquor is labeled by its "proof," which is double its alcoholic strength: "80 proof" means 40 percent alcohol, while "100 proof" means 50 percent alcohol.

Straight liquor reaches the brain faster because it is absorbed into the blood stream faster than liquor which is diluted.

But when liquor is diluted, what you use as a mixer has an influence on absorption of the alcohol. The carbonation in soda or ginger ale will speed the passage of the alcohol through the stomach. Thus, the alcohol in liquor diluted with water is absorbed most slowly; the alcohol in liquor diluted with soda is absorbed somewhat faster; and the alcohol in straight liquor is absorbed fastest of all.

The flavor of the liquor does not affect the drinker. It's the alcohol content that affects him. Each

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liquor has a different flavor because each is made from different ingredients. Whiskey is made from grain such as corn, barley, rye; vodka from corn, other cereals, and potatoes; rum from molasses; gin from alcohol flavored with juniper berries.

But all ordinary liquors have roughly the same alcohol content. With most vodkas, gins, whiskies, rums, 1 ounce contains about 1/2 ounce of pure alcohol.

Switching, or mixing, won't make you drunker because the degree of drunkenness is determined by the total amount of alcohol your blood absorbs, not by the flavor of the beverage. However, for some people switching is more likely to cause nausea and vomiting, possibly because of the different flavorings and mixers used.

Nothing can speed the sobering-up process because your body oxidizes alcohol at a steady rate. Coffee can help keep you awake, but it won't improve your judgment or sharpen your reactions. A person who drinks can only wait for his liver to burn up the alcohol, at the rate of about 1 hour for every 1/2 ounce of alcohol he has drunk.

Under certain circumstances, one drink may affect a driver's judgment, may interfere with his normal alertness, especially if he is an inexperienced driver or an inexperienced drinker. He may become overconfident, careless, more likely to take chances—running through a red light, passing on a curve, speeding. To be absolutely safe, anyone should wait at least an hour after

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having a drink, before he drives. If he cannot, he should find a nondrinker to take the wheel.

Drunkenness is temporary loss of control over one's reactions and behavior while drinking alcohol. Anyone who drinks immoderately at one time or another may become drunk.

Alcoholism is a serious illness. The alcoholic person loses control of his drinking. He is dependent on alcohol; and his drinking interferes with some vital part of his life —his work, his family, his emotional or physical health. He may feel that drinking offers him not only escape, but actually the only satisfaction he can find in life.

Out of about 80 million people in the United States who use alcohol, 9 million are estimated to be alcoholic persons. Doctors do not know why some people become alcoholic; most experts believe that it is a combination of physical, psychological, and sociological causes. The person who drinks to escape from his emotional problems and the pressures of everyday living is probably more likely to become an alcoholic individual.

In many cases, Medicines and psychiatric treatment are used by doctors to help the alcoholic person stay sober and learn to handle his problems effectively without alcohol. Many people have also been helped by Alcoholics Anonymous, by religious guidance, and by vocational rehabilitation workers. But no single method of treatment works for everyone.

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These signs may be warnings: The person's drinking increases, especially his drinking alone. He may seek excuses to drink, or drink on the sly, or need to drink early in the morning. He may gulp drink after drink. He may "black out." (This is temporary loss of memory, not loss of consciousness.)

At this point, a person may be treated effectively if he consults his physician or minister, or a counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist. Without treatment, he faces uncontrolled drinking, frequent drunkenness, and addiction to alcohol.

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The answers to question 6 above listed both physical and psychological factors that cause people to react differently to alcohol.

These **physical factors** usually influence a person when he drinks:

If a person sips an alcoholic beverage—containing 1/2 ounce of pure alcohol—slowly enough to make it last for a full hour, he is not likely to feel any effects. His body will be burning up the alcohol steadily, at the same rate at which his blood stream is absorbing it. But if he quickly gulps his drink, he will quickly feel the effect; and it will take an hour for that feeling to wear off.

If a person has eaten before drinking, the food in his stomach will slow down the rate at which the alcohol is absorbed into his blood stream. Thus, the alcohol will reach the brain at a slower rate than if the drink were taken on an empty stomach.

When alcohol is consumed in the form of beer or wine, it has a slower effect than when the same amount of alcohol is consumed in the form of liquor. Beer and wine contain nutrients and other substances which slow down the absorption of the alcohol, resulting in lower alcohol concentrations in the blood.

A 180-pound person has more blood and other fluids in his body than does a 120-pound person. Thus, the same amount of alcohol will be more diluted in the heavier person's blood stream, and it will not affect him as soon or as strongly as it will affect the 120-pound person.

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Every person has special conditions within his own body, and many researchers believe that a person's internal functioning may affect his reactions to alcohol. Some people can drink a great deal of alcohol and seem to remain quite sober. There are others who react with nausea and vomiting when drinking even small amounts of alcohol.

And here are a few examples of how **psychological factors** may influence a person when he drinks:

Often, we unthinkingly regulate our behavior when we're drinking, depending on where we are, and with whom. A young businessman, having dinner with a friend, may feel slightly high after one drink. But when he has dinner with his boss the next night, one drink may not seem to affect him at all; he is keeping a tighter grip on his behavior. In the same way, a high school boy may find that one beer makes him noisy and boisterous when he is horsing around with other boys at a friend's house—but he can suddenly quiet down when the friend's parents come home.

A person's emotions can affect his drinking behavior. When he is at ease, comfortable, he is likely to stop after he feels the relaxing effect of one drink. But at another time when he is tense or angry, he may feel pressured to continue drinking until his mind no longer focuses on his problems.

A person's reasons for drinking can actually affect his reac-

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tions to alcohol, too. Someone who is drinking to have an excuse for acting up may unconsciously exaggerate the effect that alcohol is having on him. And someone who is boasting that he can hold his liquor may succeed, at first, in masking the effects of the alcohol—until he drinks so much that he finds he is drunk.

How a person feels about using alcohol depends largely on ideas he absorbed while growing up. For instance, if his parents sometimes served a round of drinks when friends dropped in, he may look on drinking as an occasional activity, tied in with socializing, and to be used only in moderation. Someone else, who often heard his parents speak of "needing a drink" in times of trouble, might look on drinking as a necessity whenever he is faced with a serious problem.

These are only examples, not general rules; each person adjusts in his own special way to his home atmosphere. In a family where parents abstain because they disapprove of alcohol, one young man may use excessive drinking to assert himself against his parents. His brother, however, may feel adventuresome if he does have a drink, but may have guilt feelings that guard him against drinking to the point of drunkenness.

The person who is used to alcohol recognizes when it is beginning to interfere with his judgment and coordination. Certain reactions warn him when to stop drinking; and he has learned certain ways to control his behavior.

The inexperienced drinker does not have a clear picture of how he reacts to alcohol, nor has he learned to control his reactions. In fact, since he is expecting the alcohol to go to his head, he may purposely behave with less control. Also, he is unsure of when to stop, so he may drink more than he can handle.

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